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AESTRACT

The relationship between paradigmatic and syntagmatic cral associates and reading readiness test scores was investigated. Paradigmatic associates were defined as responses demonstrating superordinate, coordinate, contrast, or part-whole relaticnships, and syntagmatic associates were defined as any other responses. Subjects were 52 first graders who had not had kindergarten experience and who were in the sixth and seventh weeks of first grade. The Metropclitan Readiness Test and the Oral P/S Language Inventory were administered. Results of the language inventory responses were analyzed as paradigmatic or syntagmatic and subjected to a t test which found significant differences between the high and low readiness groups. It was concluded (1) that the readiness test measured children's ability to give paradigmatic responses and (2) that children should be given instruction in word association early in reading instruction. The Oral P/S Language Inventory stimulus words and references are included. (MS)

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ORAL ASSOCIATES AS AN INDICATOR OF READING READINESS

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The relationship between oral associates (either paradigmatic or syntagmatic) and scores achieved on a reading readiness test was examined in this study. Paradigmatic associates are those responses which demonstrate superordinate (apple-fruit), co-ordinate (arm-leg), contrast (white-black), or part-whole (branch-tree) relationships, while all other responses are defined as being syntagmatic.

Fifty-two first grade public school pupils from a small city in Georgia that did not provide kindergarten facilities were the subjects for the study. The Metropolitan Readiness Test was administered during the sixth week of the Fall term, 1970, and the Oral P/S Language Inventory was completed during the seventh week of the same term. This list was developed from An Integrating Basic Communication Vocabulary (Fitzgerald, 1963).

All subjects were given the Metropolitan Readiness Test in group sessions as prescribed by the test manual. The subjects were divided into a high group and a low group according to a median split. There were twenty-six subjects in each group.

RE003 388

Given the directions, "Give me the first word you think of when I say this word" each subject was tested individually with the Oral P/S Language Inventory. All thirty words were administered orally and the examiner wrote the response down next to the stimulus word.

Figure 1

Oral P/S Language Inventory

1. in	11. high	21. poor
2. she	12. city	22. happy
3. go	13. war	23. hot
4. up	14. open	24. South
5. old	15. white	25. easy
6. day	16. morning	26. pretty
7. king	17. pay	27. against
8. life	18. laugh	28. wife
9. work	19. front	29. smile
10. father	20. short	30. foreign

The results of the language responses were analyzed according to the paradigmatic-syntagmatic dichotomy and subjected to a t test for significance. The results of the analysis are noted in Table I.

Table I

Data for the High and Low Metropolitan Readiness Groups on Syntagmatic Language Responses

Group	Mean Syntagmatic Response	SD of Mean Score	Diff of Mean	SE of Diff	t-ratio
High Readiness	17	7.42			
			12	1.51	7.9*
Low Readiness	29	.32			

*p < .01

The difference between the high and low groups on syntagmatic responses was significant at the .01 level of confidence. The low group had a significantly greater amount of syntagmatic responses than did the high group. A reliability correlation co-efficient of r=.78 was obtained by a test-retest of the Ss.

These results would seem to indicate that since readiness tests probably measure to a great extent the child's ability to respond paradigmatically, academic success would be enhanced by early training and practice with associates that are paired paradigmatically. It would appear that these results support Samuels and Wittrock (1969) who suggest that even minimal amounts of word-associating training would aid in the teaching of reading. This would also seem to be in line with the Staats

and Staats (1963) recommendation for the use of word associates incorporated into the development of primer texts.

If, as Ervin (1957) suggests, a young child responds normally to associates with a predominance of syntagmatic responses and that as Entwisle (1966) found that the paradigmatic increase comes with age, it would seem that the process could be accelerated by training.

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